

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

1. Applicant submits amended Figure 1 which now depicts arrows (A) and (F) as described in para. [0021]. Please find enclosed a Replacement Sheet.

2. Applicant submits amended Figure 4 which now depicts a compression plate (51). Please find enclosed a Replacement Sheet.

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

1. Applicant has amended Figure 4 to depict a bottom compression plate (51) as requested by the Examiner. Applicant respectfully submits that such amendment adds no new subject matter as compression plates are repeatedly referenced and described in the specification as originally filed. Applicant has also amended paragraph [0027] of the specification to properly describe amended Figure 4.
2. Applicant has amended Figure 1 to show arrows "A" (air or oxidant flow) and "F" (fuel flow), as described in paragraph [0021] of the specification as originally submitted.
3. Examiner has rejected claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. 102 (b) as being anticipated by WO 98/57384 to Donelson *et al* (Donelson). Donelson is directed to a fuel cell assembly that seeks to overcome the problems of the breakage of solid oxide electrolyte fuel cells due to tensile forces arising from uneven and excessive loading placed on the fuel cells (see page 2, lines 6-15, and page 3, lines 1-2). Donelson attempts to solve this problem using a combination of spacer plates (34) and compression members (32). The spacer plate (34) defines a chamber (36) between the interconnect members (24 and 26) and the fuel cell (16) and a compression member (32) is inserted into such chamber to provide an even distribution of force onto the surface of the fuel cell (16) (see page 10, lines 16-30). Donelson is thus concerned with the general relationship of all of the interconnect members with the fuel cells, and loading dynamics between the same.

The present invention is also directed to the problem of the breakage of the fuel cells due to uneven compressive loading, but it is in particular directed to the breakage of terminal fuel cells and is focused on the interface between the compression plates, the current

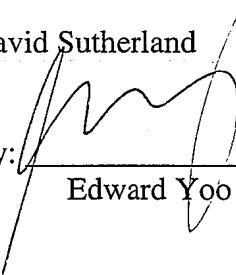
collector plates, the terminal interconnects and the terminal fuel cells. Accordingly, in independent claims 1 and 6 of the present invention, current collector plates disposed between compression plates are claimed. It is respectfully submitted that Donelson does not disclose or teach the use of current collection plates. In Examiners office action, Examiner states at page 3 that Donelson discloses "a cathode current collector plate 22 and an anode collector plate 18". A close review of Donelson discloses that elements 22 and 18 are in fact part of the fuel cell 16 which is comprised an electrolyte layer 20, a cathode layer 22 and an anode layer 18 (see page 9 lines 3-16). These elements are not analogous to current collection plates and are functionally very different. Examiner further states at page 4 that Donelson discloses "(a) a current collector plate 38 comprising a substantially planar element disposed immediately adjacent the compression plate 12; (b) an interconnect plate 40 disposed immediately adjacent and in electrical contact with the terminal fuel cell 16". A review of Donelson indicates that element 38 is not a current collector plate, but is rather one of three layers of the compressible element 32. Element 40 is not an interconnect plate but is also one of the three layers of the compressible element 32 (see page 11, line 1-4). Further, element 12 is not a compression plate, but rather is an interconnect member.

It is respectfully submitted that Donelson does not teach or disclose an element of the claims of the present application, namely current collector plates, and as such Donelson does not anticipate independent claim 1 or 6, or any dependent claims thereto. Accordingly, claims 1-9 of the present application should be allowed.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks and amendments, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance and allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosures: 1. Replacement Sheet – Figure 1
2. Replacement Sheet – Figure 4